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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PDEM](#) [KCRM](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQI REACTION TO ISRAEL-LEBANON SITUATION

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission David M. Satterfield for reasons  
1.4 (B) and (D).

**¶1.** (S) SUMMARY: Israeli military action in Lebanon has brought strong condemnation from Iraqi officials across the political spectrum. No negative reference has been made to Hezbollah militia actions. Friday prayers were dominated by anti-Israeli rhetoric, and demonstrations against Israel reportedly took place in Baghdad and Kirkuk. There are also reports from Babil Province that Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) is actively recruiting fighters to aid Hezbollah in Lebanon. END SUMMARY.

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Iraqi Officials Condemn "Israeli Aggression"  
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**¶2.** (C) On July 15, Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki issued the following statement condemning the Israeli air strikes on Lebanon: Prime Minister Nuri Kamel al-Maliki condemns the Israeli air strikes on Lebanon and warns of the consequences for the region of escalation. The Prime Minister requests the meeting of Arab Foreign Ministers to adopt a clear position condemning the criminal operations in Lebanon and Gaza, and affirms that these attacks shall increase the determination and unity of the fraternal Lebanese people in confronting the Israeli aggression, which is causing an increase in tension and upsetting the political map. End Text. DCM contacted National Security Advisor Mowafaq al-Rubaie to express dismay over the PM's unbalanced statement which made no reference to Hezbollah actions.

**¶3.** (U) On July 16, CoR Speaker Mahmud Al-Mashhadani sent a personal message to the Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, saying that Iraqis support Lebanon and calling Israeli aggression "outrageous." In a unanimous decision, the CoR also issued a statement condemning Israel's actions. In an al-Sulaymania KurdSat TV interview broadcast July 18, President Jalal Talabani added his condemnation of the aggressions against the Lebanese people. In his interview remarks, he went so far as to call the "war" filthy.

**¶4.** (U) On July 17, Grand Ayatollah Al-Sistani's office issued a statement calling for action against the Israeli aggressions. This statement criticizes those countries turning a blind eye and describes condemnation statements as inadequate. The Al-Sistani statement urges the world to act and stop the aggression.

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Demonstrators Denounce Israel, US  
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**¶5.** (U) Across Iraq, anti-Israeli sermons dominated Friday prayers on July 15. Moqtada Al-Sadr released a written statement read in many mosques denouncing "what the Zionist terrorist does with the aid from America." One cleric in

Sadr City compared the Israeli attacks in Lebanon with the U.S. invasion of Iraq, leading to street demonstrations in which Hezbollah supporters chanted "Down with Israel, Down with America!" Demonstrators also reportedly gathered in Kirkuk.

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JAM Recruiting Fighters for Lebanon  
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**¶6. (C)** According to REO Hillah contacts, a JAM campaign to recruit fighters for service in Lebanon has kicked into high gear. Recruitment of females is said to be a high priority, although it is not known in what capacity they would be employed. Hazim Al-Araji, a JAM member with high-ranking relatives in Hezbollah, is reportedly in charge of the drive.  
KHALILZAD